United Nations A/HRC/31/NGO/151

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Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 7
Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Written statement* submitted by Amuta for NGO Responsibility, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-02667(E)

Please recycle

International Community Must Stop Justifying and Supporting Terrorism Against Israelis

Since October 2015, Palestinian terrorists have targeted Israelis on a daily basis with shootings, stabbings, car rammings, and bombings. Most of the attacks have been directed at women and the elderly. Palestinians have murdered parents in front of their children, including the January 16 atrocity where Dafna Meir was slaughtered in her home while her children looked on in horror. Were it not for her heroic actions to save her children, they might also have been killed.

These crimes against humanity are a direct result of antisemitic incitement to violence and genocide perpetrated by the Palestinian leadership (PLO and Hamas) and other terror groups (Islamic Jihad, PFLP, Hezbollah, etc.). Indeed, Meir's killer admitted he wanted to murder a Jew after watching incitement on Palestinian Authority television.

The current wave of terrorism cannot be separated from the near century-long effort of the Palestinians and Arab States to demonize Israel and erase Jewish self-determination in the land of Israel. Rather than work towards a mutually beneficial end of the conflict, Palestinian leaders disseminate antisemitic propaganda denying deep Jewish historical roots and presence in the region, promote boycotts and sanctions, and exploit international legal and human rights frameworks to bolster rejectionism.

Shamefully and immorally, many in the international community have promoted and justified the Palestinian strategy of terrorism. For instance, in November 2015, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom appeared to blame the Paris attacks on the Arab-Israeli conflict and immorally stated that the choice for Palestinians is that they "must either accept a desperate situation or resort to violence." She asserted that killing Palestinian terrorists in the midst of committing murder was a "disproportionate" reaction by Israel and constituted "extrajudicial executions".

Aside from the immorality, Wallstrom's remarks reflect profound double standards directed towards Israel and Jews. When Swedish police fatally shot a sword-wielding man who had killed two in a Swedish classroom in October 2015, Wallstrom did not call it an extra-judicial execution. If ISIS terrorists were in the middle of massacring Swedish citizens, would Wallstrom demand that police hold their fire or later accuse them of illegal killings for neutralizing murder in process?

Similarly, just days after the shocking murder of Dafna Meir in her home, UN Secretary Ban Ki Moon stated that Palestinian terrorism was understandable because it is "human nature to react to occupation". It is inconceivable that Moon or Wallstrom would claim that the Paris attacks were the only "natural" response to the lack of integration of Muslim communities in Europe, that Anders Brevkik's slaughter in Norway was a "natural" reaction to profound anger at the government, or that rape could be justified because it was the only "natural response" to a woman wearing provocative clothing. Yet, according to these officials, murder of Israeli civilians at cafes and supermarkets, on buses, in their homes and cars is logical and understandable. As commentator and senior fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, Emily Landau noted on Twitter "for Ban, violence, cold-blooded murder, is only option, indeed natural response. Beyond glaring hypocrisy, message is horrific" and "with NYT oped Ban ki-Moon only deepens his shameful, outrageous approach. Why can't frustration b driver for positive change?" Esteemed philosopher Michael Walzer has also condemned the "political culture" that excuses terrorism, particularly the claim, as advanced by Wallstrom and Moon that terrorism is a supposedly "last resort" of "oppressed and embittered people who have run out of options" – "that they must be terrorists or do nothing at all". None of this, in Walzer's words, "excuses terrorism" or makes it "morally understandable."

In conjunction with immoral statements of political leaders, the international community, notably the European Union and European governments, provide tens of millions annually for campaigns that erase the context of terrorism against Israelis, foster incitement, promote a bogus "right of resistance" (i.e. justifying deliberate attacks on Israeli civilians), and disseminate antisemitic themes and imagery.

Among the main perpetrators promoting these immoral campaigns are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that claim to promote human rights. Many are funded without oversight by European governments and the European Union

with hundreds of millions of pounds, kroner, francs and euros. These organizations use their European taxpayer funds to issue glossy publications, interactive media, and advertisements that deny Palestinian violence, erase Israeli victims, and condemn any and all Israeli measures to combat terrorism. Their constructed narrative becomes ubiquitous in newspaper articles and on European radio and TV, and they offer a stream of anti-Israel invective at the UN and in European parliaments. Arnold Roth, whose daughter Malki who was murdered in 2001 Sbarro Pizza bombing, observes bitterly that the overriding goal of terrorism is to depersonalize, dehumanize and anonymize the victims while employing euphemisms to distract from its evil. European taxpayer funding to NGOs help Palestinian terrorists achieve this objective.

For instance, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland have provided tens of millions of euros to the Birzeit University Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat. The Secretariat's mandate is openly biased, and its implementation overwhelmingly consists of demonizing Israel and erasing crimes committed against Israeli civilians. NGOs funded by the Secretariat have been the most offensive and profoundly immoral, including disseminating antisemitic propaganda. Several officials at Secretariat-funded organizations have alleged links to the PFLP terror group, but the European government funders are apparently nonplussed. (Funding for the IHL Secretariat is up for renewal or cancellation in June 2016.)

Badil, a recipient of at least $260,000 in funding (Badil's finances are not transparent) from the Secretariat, was founded to promote a so-called Palestinian "right of return" and is a leader of international BDS campaigns. BADIL holds annual "right of return contests," promotes "resistance" rhetoric, has published virulently antisemitic cartoons on its website, as well as imagery promoting a one-state agenda and denying Israel's right to exist. An anti-peace image on its website shows a tsunami of keys (representing Palestinian "refugees") violently flooding and destroying Israel (represented by a man wearing a skullcap with the Israeli flag) and a "negotiating table" (representing peace talks). Badil's 2016 Al Awda contest is entitled "Return is our Right and our Will: Walking or Crawling We will Return".

Al Haq, recipient of a $710,000 grant from the Secretariat, maintains a list on its website calling terrorist attacks "alleged" crimes, and promotes the fiction that Palestinians were killed arbitrarily instead of while murdering Israelis. Al Haq does not refer to Palestinian terror attacks as criminal or illegal, nor does it attempt to ascertain the identities and conditions of the Israeli victims.

In one statement representative of Al Haq's publications, the NGO incredulously laments the death of Palestinian Ghasan Abu Jamal, "who was shot dead by Israeli police in November 2014 after allegedly attacking a synagogue in West Jerusalem." Jamal was shot on scene in the middle of carrying out a murderous rampage that left five dead. Yet, Al Haq promotes a false narrative that the events of this atrocity are in doubt. Massive funding by the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland makes this propaganda possible.

In another egregious example, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), which has also received more than $700,000 from the Secretariat (and millions from the European Union and other governments), denied stabbings in Jerusalem had taken place, calling the incidents "alleged" and referred to the civilian victims as "settlers." It is unclear how PCHR believes Palestinian terrorists determine who is a "settler" before killing them or if the NGO thinks the murder of "settlers" is justified. Perhaps PCHR believes that all Israelis regardless of where they live are "settlers". Regardless, this type of inflammatory and immoral rhetoric, supported by European funding, is aimed, as described by Arnold Roth, at dehumanizing Israeli victims of terrorism.

The erasing of Palestinian terrorism and demonizing Israel is nothing new for these organizations and many others who can credit their existence to EU and European government funding. Last June, they held events at the UN in conjunction with the presentation of the UN Schabas-Davis report on the 2014 Gaza War, erasing Hamas attacks, accusing Israel of deliberately murdering children, and endorsing a "right of resistance." Many representatives from the EU and European delegations were in the room, yet not one of them spoke out against this immoral propaganda.

It is no surprise that these NGOs are the most active at the UN. In addition to financing their absurd commentary on the conflict – European funding pays for a lot of plane tickets, hotels, and advertising. European diplomats unabashedly socialize with these anti-peace activists in UN halls and they are permanent fixtures at the obscene NGO events.

These examples and the statements such as those made by Margot Wallstrom and Ban ki Moon further demonstrate that those who erase the humanity of Israeli terror victims and justify Palestinian terrorism have a welcome home at the UN and in Europe.

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Written statement* submitted by Amuta for NGO Responsibility, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

TRANSPARENCY IN HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING STILL LACKING

The UN Human Rights Council Commissions of Inquiry (COI) framework is broken and in need of a complete overhaul In its efforts to reform this mechanism, the Office of the High Commission of Human Rights has ignored the most problematic issues. Unless these structural failures are addressed, they will continue to have little to no impact in reducing civilian harm in armed conflict or bolstering the standing on the already discredited UNHRC.

To be considered credible, any fact-finding effort must adhere to the principles of "do no harm," independence, impartiality, objectivity, discretion, transparency, confidentiality, integrity, and professionalism. The Lund-London Guidelines of the International Bar Association emphasize that in order for a fact-finding mission to comply with its obligations, the people involved must be individuals "who are and are seen to be unbiased." Moreover, all work under the Council's auspices must be guided by "universality," "non-selectivity," and "balance."

HRC-mandated COI's, however, fail to comply with many of these principles. One of the most glaring deficiencies is the lack of transparency throughout every stage of the process. Indeed, the secretive nature of HRC COIs is a glaring international anomaly. We could not find any examples of credible inquiries where the lack of transparency was as pronounced as that of the HRC COI process. Transparency is not only a cornerstone of good governance, but it is essential to prevent corruption, conflicts of interest, and bias.

Lack of transparency permeates almost every phase of HRC COIs, starting with the appointments process, through the writing, publication, and promotion of resulting COI reports. This statement will focus primarily on staffing.

Appointments

Unlike other UN appointments, the process for HRC commissions of inquiry is completely hidden. It is unknown how potential members are selected for COIs, how qualifications are reviewed and conflicts of interest screened, and who ultimately decides the appointments. There is no transparency regarding interactions with the HRC President and who carries the most influence regarding selection of mission members.

This failure has resulted in disastrous appointments when it comes to COIs, particularly those relating to Israel. In fact, it appears that a public record of animus directed at Israel is a requirement for at least one member of every team. As noted by legal scholar and former member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Christina Cerna:

> In my view Israel has a unique status in the UN Human Rights Council. Impartiality is not a requirement sought by the Council for the appointment of experts when it comes to Israel. I was selected as the consensus candidate of the Consultative Committee for the post of UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories earlier this year, but the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States both officially opposed me, which killed my candidacy. They opposed me for "lack of expertise," although my entire professional life has been involved with human rights, but because I had never said anything pro-Palestinian and consequently was not known to be "partial" enough to win their support. The candidate that they officially supported was considered to be partial in their favor. No other special procedures mandate is similarly biased. At the end of the day, neither I nor the OIC candidate was appointed, but the Indonesian diplomat, Makarim Wibisono, who was appointed, was considered sufficiently "pro-Palestinian" to be acceptable to the OIC. Consequently, I don't think Bill Schabas could have been selected to lead the "independent" inquiry if he hadn't made the comments he had made about Netanyahu.

Staffing

Another key transparency failure for HRC COIs are the extraordinary efforts taken by OHCHR and the COIs in order to keep the positions and identities of staff members and consultants aiding the Secretariats hidden. Dozens of individuals are involved in COIs including consultants, NGO lobbyists, researchers, legal advisors, media advisors, investigators, supposed experts on forensics and military issues, archivists, writers, graphic artists, and PR operatives. Yet none of these people or their roles is identified. The failure to do so makes it impossible for outside sources to independently evaluate whether these individuals are objective and free from conflicts of interest, and have the requisite expertise. Given that these unnamed individuals do the bulk of the information collection, compiling of data, witness interviews, and drafting of the report, this failure to disclose is a clear violation of fact-finding standards and ethical principles.

Expertise

Another serious concern plaguing the workings of HRC COIs is the lack of expertise in military operations and the laws of armed conflict (LOAC)/international humanitarian law (IHL). Like staffers, these experts are not identified. Despite the fact that is impossible to conduct an inquiry or issue a report that is supposed to examine violations of international humanitarian law without military and legal expertise, it is unknown whether COIs involving armed conflict even retain experts on these matters. If individuals are retained ostensibly to provide such expertise, by failing to identify them, it is impossible to evaluate the qualifications of those consulted.

Leading scholar and military advisor Professor Michael Schmitt describes why military experience is critical to report on armed conflict:

> An investigator who does not understand, for example, weapons options, fuzing, guidance systems, angle of attack, optimal release altitudes, command and control relationships, communications capabilities, tactical options, available intelligence options, enemy practices, pattern of life analysis, collateral damage estimate methodology, human factors in a combat environment, and so forth, will struggle to effectively scrutinize an air strike.[1]

Similarly, lack of expertise regarding LOAC/IHL is just as problematic as a lack of military experience. Knowledge of human rights law and international criminal law is insufficient to carry out the work of the HRC mandate. According to Professor David Kaye, IHL has become "highly technical, susceptible to different legal interpretations and embodied in a complicated inter-woven network of conventions as well as entrenched in general international law."[2] Key IHL provisions are often difficult to interpret and are undermined by a lack of consensus. Many concepts have been hotly debated and involve much controversy, including the very relevant and applicable principles of proportionality and direct participation of civilians in hostilities. Customary international law is even less-well understood: There is considerable disagreement on state practice and how it is to be measured[3]; in many cases, a customary rule will be claimed even though a significant number of states do not abide by it.[4] Often the necessary conditions of state practice and *opinion juris* are conflated. Furthermore, those invoking customary law often rely upon tendentious and selective sources.

The lack of military and legal expertise has been apparent in almost every HRC COI. Moreover, there is extensive reliance in the COI reports on legal and military claims made by NGOs and others who do not possess the requisite information, professionalism, or expertise to make the claims that they do.

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[1] Schmitt, Michael N., *Investigating Violations of International Law in Armed Conflict*, 2 Harv. Nat'l Sec. J. 31, 84 (2011).

[2] David Kaye, 'Complexity in the Law of War' in Russell A Miller and Rebecca M Bratspies (eds), Progress in International Law (Martinus Nijhoff 2008) 681

[3] Eric Posner & Jack Goldsmith, *The Limits of International Law* (Oxford 2006) at 23.

[4] Id. at 24.

Conclusion

Lack of transparency is not only a violation of best practices for fact finding and the mandates of the UN and the HRC, but practically speaking, it produces shoddy results. Without providing the basis on which independent evaluation and analysis can occur, the claims, conclusions, and recommendations made in COI reporting are worthless. In addition, the failure to be transparent is yet more evidence of the documented bias and politicization endemic at the HRC and associated frameworks. The only reasonable conclusion one can draw from COI staffing secrecy, therefore, is that not only are these mechanisms unethical, unprofessional, and unwilling to engage in substantive reform, but they also have something to hide.

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Please recycle

Proposed Guidelines for Foreign Government Funding to Israeli and Palestinian NGOs

The European Union and its member states, as well as Norway and Switzerland, claim that upholding and promoting universal values such as human rights and democracy are central to their foreign policies. In order to advance these values, Europe provides extensive funding to civil society organizations that are active on these issues, including to groups outside of Europe.

This mechanism has resulted in the transfer of very large sums to a narrow spectrum of highly politicized Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, on a unique scale, which raises many difficult issues that must be addressed. Much of the European state funding for NGOs takes place with very limited transparency, accountability, or due diligence. In many instances, support is provided for activities and organizations that are inconsistent with Europe's declared values and objectives, and are closely linked to anti-peace campaigns of demonization and boycotts. This external funding ostensibly for "civil" society creates reactions that lead to conflict, and also impinges uniquely on Israeli sovereignty and the democratic process.

Hundreds of millions of Euros, kroner, pounds, and francs in European state funding are provided to fringe organizations to oppose government policies on some of the most contentious issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Foreign state funding to similar NGOs in Europe, for instance to support Basque separatists in Spain, abortion activists in Ireland, or ending laicite in France would not be tolerated. When the European Union provided a limited amount of funding to the American Bar Association for research on the death penalty, the resulting reports were replete with disclaimers that the funding was not intended in any way to challenge US laws or policies. Both the EU and the ABA were well aware that financial support by the EU for such lobbying would have caused a political firestorm in the United States.

These issues are now a major part of the political discussion in Israel, including proposed legislation to oversee foreign government funding to Israeli NGOs mainly via increased transparency measures. Europeans have also injected themselves into this debate by providing financing to NGOs lobbying against the legislation, issuing hysterical letters bemoaning the end of democracy, and threatening consequences to bi-lateral ties. These activities are marred by severe double standards. The European Union for instance claims that increasing transparency is a central component of good governance, yet condemn efforts to enhance it in Israel. When Austria passed a law banning foreign funding to mosques and Muslim NGOs (far more draconian than anything proposed by Israeli politicians), there was no outcry by European officials, opeds or letters, or threats to Austria's standing.

Instead of secret funding and circumventing diplomatic channels, Europe should work with Israel's Knesset to address these issues jointly and reach understandings as to what is appropriate in foreign funding for civil society. This will be strengthen their shared democratic values, advance constructive dialogue, and promote human rights in a manner consistent with the foreign policy of European governments.

Recommendations for European government funding guidelines:

Principles

1. No funding for NGOs involved in antisemitism

The Amuta's research project, NGO Monitor, has published many examples of (directly and indirectly) European-funded NGOs and their officials promoting blatant antisemitism. The Palestinian group BADIL, funded by the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat (budget via Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Denmark), publishes blatantly antisemitic caricatures. This NGO has received indirect funds from the EU, Denmark, and Ireland. Sabeel (which receives funds from the Netherlands and Sweden indirectly), regularly publishes antisemitic content.

2. No funding for NGOs involved in terrorism/terrorism supporters/terrorist affiliated staff

European governments and the EU maintain lists of "designated terrorist groups," such as Hamas, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and the Popular Front for the Libation of Palestine (PFLP). Despite this, European governments fund NGOs that have alleged ties to these terrorist groups. For instance, the director of Palestinian group Al-Haq is allegedly a member of the PFLP. The Israeli High Court of Justice has described him as "Dr. Jekyll and Mister Hyde" – a human rights worker by day, a terrorist by night. Addameer (a Palestinian NGO funded by the Secretariat) also has alleged links to the PFLP. Other NGOs, such as the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), legitimize Palestinian terror attacks against civilians by labeling them "resistance."

3. No funding for organizations that deny Israel's right to define itself as a Jewish state, that promote one-state frameworks, or support "right of return" claims for millions of refugee descendants

Europe has consistently supported "two states" as the framework for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In sharp contrast, there are numerous examples of funding to NGOs that deny Israel's right to exist within any borders and/or call for the implementation of a Palestinian "right of return" into Israel. Israeli group Zochrot (indirectly funded by Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, and others) supports a "right of return", and calls for a "de-zionized" Israel in which Jews will become a "minority." Most Palestinian groups also support these demands, and almost all of them call for the implementation of a so-called "right of return".

4. No funding for NGOs involved in BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) campaigns

The EU and European states have consistently asserted that they oppose boycotts of Israel. At the same time, they fund many NGOs that promote BDS. These NGOs not only target Israeli businesses, but European companies as well. BDS has tried to destroy (some cases successfully) many initiatives to foster Israeli and Palestinian co-existence and projects aimed at improving Palestinian health and economy. The NGOs also intend to disrupt mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between Israel and Europe. Almost all European-funded Palestinian NGOs are signatories to the 2005 call for BDS. For instance, Al-Mezan (funded by the Secretariat, Ireland, Norway, the EU, and others) called for boycotting the G4S security company due to its business ties with Israel. Israeli group "Who Profits" (indirectly funded by the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, and others) is the primary database for BDS campaigns against foreign and Israeli banks, security companies, and various other firms. It also assists BDS activists with identifying new "targets" for their campaigns.

5. No funding for NGOs promoting anti-Israel lawfare

Lawfare is the exploitation of courts, quasi-judicial frameworks, and legal language as political warfare to prolong conflict and prevent peaceful reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. The European-funded Palestinian (and international) NGOs leading this anti-peace campaign (including Al-Haq, Al-Mezan, Al-Dameer, and PCHR) file cases in various countries demanding the arrest and indictment of Israeli officials. In recent years, following the acceptance of "Palestine" to the International Criminal Court (ICC), there has been an intensification of lawfare efforts. These cases deliberately mask links to terror groups, are based on distorted and often invented interpretations of international law, and are aimed at restricting Israel's ability to prevent terrorism and attacks on civilians. These campaigns have direct ramifications on western countries combating terrorism, including the US and its NATO allies in Europe, which are facing similar dilemmas and problems (i.e. the use of human shields, embedding munitions and military positions among civilian populations, highly organized propaganda). While lawfare may begin with anti-Israel radicals, the results of these activities will ultimately hamper the ability to confront ISIS, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, and other terror groups, leading to far greater carnage and conflict in the future.

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Agenda item 9
Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Please recycle

Recognizing and Combating Afrophobia

Recognizing and Combating Afrophobia

The International Decade for People of African Descent which has been declared by the UN General Assembly for the period 2015-2024 represent an important achievement in the process of implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action which 15th anniversary is commemorated in 2016. The International Decade must be used effectively to combat racism against people of African Descent in every respect in the spirit of "Recognition, Justice, Development".

We welcome the active use of the term "Afrophobia" by the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the first time in his address to the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on April 1, 2015 and on several successive occasions during 2015.

The International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN) together with the World Against Racism Network (WARN) has spearheaded the promotion of this term in the UN Human Rights mechanisms and consider the growing acceptance of this term in the UN Human Rights system as important..

In its resolution 21/33 adopted on 28 September 2012 the Human Rights Council deplored " the special form of discrimination faced by people of African descent known as 'Afrophobia'".

The active use by the Human Rights Council of the term Afrophobia was in response to the recommendations of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent at its tenth and eleventh sessions. In the report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent from its twelfth session adopted on 26 April 2013 the Working Group affirmed that "The recognition by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 21/33 of the term "Afrophobia", as had been recommended by the Working Group, requires an active and systematic follow-up in order to assure the full implementation of this important assertion of the special and unique form of discrimination faced by people of African descent and assuring its equal use with analogous terms that are used to address the stigmatization and prejudice against ethnic, religious and other vulnerable groups."

We hope that the group of countries, the European Union, which has regularly objected to the introduction of the term "Afrophobia" both in negotiations on resolutions and in statements at the Council will be able to reconsider its objections. We are i.a. referring to the statement at the Human Rights Council on 27 September 2011 where the EU stated that "establishing a hierarchy of those affected by racial discrimination is not acceptable. Therefore the EU rejects the introduction of potentially harmful terminology as "afrophobia". Regrettably the EU continued its opposition to the Afrophobia term at the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at its thirteenth session in October 2015 and prevented the Working Group from expressing its appreciation of the active use of the Afrophobia term by the High Commissioner.

In the context of the above it should be noted that the "Afrophobia" term has gained an increased use in European countries and at the international level and also been included in government ordinances relating to work against discrimination in one EU country, Sweden, without "harmful" consequences. The term is for example actively used by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and the Swedish Minister for Integration of the previous government commissioned the Multicultural Centre to conduct a systematic review of the current situation on afrophobia experienced by Swedes of African descent and which report was presented on February 3, 2014. The report indicated that Afrophobia, discrimination against persons of African descent, is widespread and a problem in Sweden and will hopefully help the government to better address the situation. When the newly elected Swedish Prime Minister presented his inaugural address to the parliament on October 3 2014 he included the fight against Afrophobia in his government programme. This demonstrates the importance of this form of recognition of discrimination against people of African descent. It can furthermore be noted that the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup

(ARDI) composed of Members of Parliament from different parties have formed a special Working Group on Afrophobia chaired by one of its Co-Presidents.

Anti-black racism targeted against people of African descent was the first form of discrimination to be given a name when the term "Negrophobia" was introduced in the United States in the 1830:ties and used in the campaigns against slavery and for racial equality. "Negrophobia" for example predated the appearance of "anti-Semitism" term by many decades. Afrophobia is only a modernized form of the older outdated term.

In the United Nations the "negrophobia" term was first included in the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to "examine according to his mandate incidents of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, any form of discrimination against Blacks, Arabs and Muslims, xenophobia, negrophobia, anti-Semitism, and related intolerance" as adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its fiftieth session in 1994. The "negrophobia" term disappeared in connection with the World Conference Against Racism and its early follow up for the only reason that any term including "negro" had become totally outdated and unacceptable, in particular in the English language. While the replacement of "negrophobia" with afrophobia was discussed in that connection, it did not take place and therefore deprived people of African descent the recognition it had previously had in listings of existing forms of discrimination. It is therefore a timely measure that the Human Rights Council and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent as well as the High Commissioner for Human Rights has taken to reintroduce this recognition of the special and unique form of discrimination that people of African descent face. It would be appropriate and desirable that this recognition of the Afrophobia term be strengthened and further developed by the Human Rights Council at its 31st session and be part of the commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the DDPA with the purpose to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Activities for the International Decade for People of African Descent.

The World Against Racism Network (WARN), an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Joint NGO Submission Addressing UN OHCHR Report on Protection of the Family Resolution 29/22
February 15, 2016

These comments are submitted on behalf of Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, the UN Family Rights Caucus, and 26 other supporting organizations.

Much of the OHCHR report is laudable. For example, it recognizes the critical role of the family "in the development process" (para. 12), the family's role "in the transmission of values within society that are vital for making sustainable development agenda a reality...." and the importance of establishing more family-centered policies (see para. 18).

However, we are gravely concerned that the report goes on to undermine the essence of HRC resolution 29/22 by attempting to redefine the family based on two false claims.

First, the report claims that "International standards do not prescribe a specific concept of family. . ." (para. 22) and that "There is no definition of the family under international human rights law" (para. 24). Thus, "the family" should be understood "in a wide sense" (para. 24).

"The family" is not *directly* defined in international law because there was no need to do so, as Member States have commonly understood for millennia that it refers to mother/father led family units. But, given the longstanding widespread consensus on this term, "the family" is *indirectly* defined in major UN documents. For example, consensus language referring to the family as the basic unit of society also refers to husband and wife being equal partners in marriage:

> "The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist. *Marriage* must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and ***husband*** and *wife* should be equal partners." ICPD (1994), Chapter II, Principle 9; Social Summit (1995), 80. *See also* Habitat (1996), 31. *See also* Habitat +5 (2001), 30.

Other UN consensus documents state that parenting responsibilities within the family should be carried out by "men and women," referring to fathers and mothers:

- The "equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by *men* and *women*, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well-being and that of their families...." Beijing Declaration Annex I, 15.

- State Parties "shall take appropriate measures" to recognize "the common responsibility of *men* and *women* in the upbringing and development of their children...." CEDAW, Art. 5-b. *See also* Beijing (1995), 29; ICPD (1994), 4.1.

No UN consensus language references parenthood by same sex couples. UN consensus language does recognize the need to support "female-headed households, including divorced, separated and unmarried women and widows," who "are at particular risk of poverty" as well as grandparents caring for children. Ageing (2002), 46, 103, 106(c). The UN highlights these households because of their vulnerable nature and thus their need for support.

UN treaties and other consensus documents, however, grant special legal protection to "the family" --i.e., mother/father led family units -- because they can procreate; provide the optimal environment for children; and create the human capital that sustainable development depends upon.[1] On the other hand, the data show that deviations from the mother/father married family structure generally lead to greater poverty, crime, violence, substance abuse, disease and

[1] Patrick D. Fagan, "Effects of Marriage on Society," available at: www.marripedia.org/effects_of_marriage_on_society.

other problems that in turn require heavy expenditures by governments to fix.[2] For example, one study revealed that the breakdown of the family in the U.S. alone costs taxpayers a staggering $112 billion annually.[3] Thus governments have a vested interest in protecting the family.

The report also states that "Internationally agreed texts adopted at [UN] summits and conferences" indicate a "consensus" that "varied forms of the family" are now internationally recognized (para 15).

To claim there is international consensus on the term "various forms of the family" is false and disingenuous. This is now one of the most controversial terms in UN negotiations. In recent years, every time "various forms of the family" has been proposed in UN outcome documents, it has been rejected by a large number of UN Member States. It was also expressly rejected during the negotiations on resolution 29/22.

While the term "various forms of the family" was accepted in a number of nonbinding UN documents, this was before 2005, prior to some States interpreting it to include controversial family forms. Moreover, it has never appeared in *any* binding international UN human rights instruments due to lack of consensus. Many Member States consider the term to be problematic as it is too vague, leaving it open for interpretation. With the emergence of multiple, controversial modern family forms detrimental to children (e.g., polyamorous, polyandrous and incestuous relationships), Member States should continue to reject this ambiguous term as not every emerging family form merits recognition or protection.

All individuals are entitled to have their individual human rights protected. But not all individuals have the right to have their chosen family arrangement or sexual lifestyles formally recognized or protected by governments as if they provide the same societal benefits as families based on man/woman marriage.

The OHCHR report seeks to advance the status of sexual orientation and same-sex relationships under international law by erroneously suggesting that while "international standards do not prescribe a specific concept of the family . . . international mechanisms have called upon States to protect specific forms of family in view of the vulnerability of their members in relations to the enjoyment of human rights" (para. 22 & 27). The report then notes that the CESCR committee "has called upon States to provide legal recognition of same-sex couples" (para. 27), and that the CRC committee "has called for States to protect children from discrimination based on their own or their parents- or legal guardian's sexual orientation or gender identity" (para. 42; *see also* para. 44). Yet these UN committee comments are nonbinding and therefore have no legal effect on Member States.[4]

UN committee comments are issued by a small group of self-proclaimed experts and in no way reflect the consensus of UN Member States. In fact, a number of UN Member States routinely contest the highly controversial issues of sexual orientation and gender identity each time attempts are made to advance them at the UN. For example, on 3 February, 2016, the African Group, the Group of Friends of the Family (a coalition of 25 UN Member States), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (representing 87 Member States in total) wrote letters to the UN Secretary General opposing the unauthorized promotion of sexual orientation and gender identity by the UN Postal Administration, affirming that these concepts have never gained consensus and run counter to the laws of many UN Member States.

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[2] Sharon R. Slater, *Stand for the Family*, Ch. 3 (2010) (citing to numerous studies on the social, economic, health, educational and other benefits from man/woman marriage).

[3] Benjamin Scafidi, Principal Investigator, "The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing: First-Ever Estimates for the Nation and All Fifty States," Institute for American Values (2008): 5.

[4] *See* UN Charter, Art. 13, 63 and 66.

The report also reveals bias by citing several governments that have legalized same sex marriages or unions (para. 54 & 55). Yet, it completely ignores the fact that many governments have recently amended their constitutions or enacted laws defining marriage as between a man and a woman only.[5]

In summary, only "the family" (*not* various forms of the family and not units led by same-sex marriages or couples) is the entity that is strongly protected and supported by international law (i.e., binding treaties) as the fundamental unit of society.[6]

There is not enough room in this report to adequately address another serious problem with the OHCHR report. In brief, we are also deeply concerned that the report asserts that States are required, as a matter of international law, to honor the "rights" of "all individuals, including adolescents," to "access sexual and reproductive health services and information" without third party (parental) consent (para. 33).

No international laws grant rights to children of minor age to receive sexual information without parental consent. If such rights were to be promoted, it would undermine *well-established* parental rights. Specifically, "Parents have a *prior right* to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children" UDHR, Article 26 (3). In fact, "Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child...." CRC (1990), Article 18-1. "The family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children from infancy to adolescence. Introduction of children to the culture, *values* and *norms* of their society begins in the family." Children's Summit (1990), 15, 18.

Conclusion

To ensure that the OHCHR report does not exceed the mandate of HRC resolution 29/22 (*see* para. 28) and for it to be consistent with international law, the following edits should be made:

- Delete references in paragraphs 27, 42 and 44 to comments or recommendations from treaty monitoring bodies that promote protection for sexual orientation and legal recognition of same-sex couples based on *ultra vires* interpretations of international law.

- Remove language in paragraph 77 suggesting that there is international consensus on "the need to recognize the diverse and changing forms of the family institution."

- Remove language in paragraph 33 that grants rights to adolescents to sexual and reproductive health services and information without third party consent.

Family and Demography Foundation, Russia CitizenGO Pro Vita Onlus, Italy FEMINA EUROPA Ordo Iuris, Poland For Family Rights, Russia Child Protection Institute, Liberty University School of Law Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity - USA (PEACE-USA) Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity - Education Services (Canada) Family Policy Institute, South Africa The Magdalene Institute, USA Human Dignity Center, Hungary FAFCE (Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe) Novae Terrae Foundation, ITA Enraizados, Spain Profesionales por la Etica Women of the World Red Familia Mexico UN Family Rights Caucus , NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

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[5] In Europe alone, 13 countries recently rewrote their laws to ensure that marriage is clearly defined as being solely between one man and one woman. Only 24 countries around the world support same-sex marriage--a fraction of the 193 Member States that make up the UN.

[6] UDHRC (1948), Article 16(3); ICESR (1976), Article 10-1; ICCPR (1976), Article 23-1; Disabilities (2006), Preamble (x); CRC Preamble; Migrant Workers, Article 44.

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Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, International-Lawyers.Org, Arab Organization for Human Rights, General Arab Women Federation, Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru", International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Organisation Mondiale des associations pour l'éducation prénatale, Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Cooperation Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE Internationale, Union of Arab Jurists, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, International Educational Development, Inc., World Peace Council, non-governmental organizations on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Please recycle

Economic, Social and Cultural rights in Iraq

Abstract

The aim of this statement is to review the deterioration of Economic, Social and Cultural rights of the Iraqi people as a result of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the following Occupation.
The period of destruction of the Iraqi social welfare started in 1990 when the security council imposed punitive sanctions, that remained intact for thirteen years despite, their impact on innocent Iraqi civilians. The consequences of the sanctions were dramatic and can still be felt today in areas of health, education and the quality of public services provided.
Moreover the 2003 invasion lacked Security Council consent and hence is considered as a war of aggression. A war classified as a grave international crime.

We conclude that what we are witnessing in Iraq today is the consequence of the illegal war initated by permanent members of the Security Council; principally the United States and the United Kingdom, which has devastated the country and produced the horrific social conditions and conflicts in Iraq of today.

Access to basic services
Today 60% of Iraqi households suffer from substandard living conditions.
A Chronic food security situation is being fueled by conflict, prices are rising and inflation further threatens the real income of citizens.
In terms of water supply, the Iraqi society faces a lack of proper water source and a poorly maintained sewage system. Corruption is contributing to the problem and the whole delivery mechanism continues to be under-maintained.

Poor water quality facilitates, waterborne disease and the spread of illness affect Iraqi children, IDP's and refugees.

Scarcity of usable water threatens agriculture, industrial production and energy sector hence further increasing unemployment. Moreover, electricity provision is on the decline.

Health Care
Health wise, annual healthcare budget plummeted to $22 million, 5% of 1990's average. And access to health care is impossible for a huge part of the population. Plagued by corruption, money directed to the health system is being embezzled to offshore accounts and rapid senior and middle management changes left the system with no clear direction.

Military activity and conflict facilitates the destruction of health care facilities and roadblocks hinder the effectiveness of victim transport.

Today, a decade after the occupation of Iraq, many are left traumatized baring psychological issues. The Iraqi health system is unable to deal with such types of health problems and a mental health policy is non-existent.

The invasion and the following occupation resulted also in an environment catastrophe.
Contamination was detected in 350 sites. This led to high toxic levels of lead, mercury and depleted uranium pollution further, endangering the health state of many individuals; higher rates of birth defects in children following 2004 Fallujah attack 4-fold excess of infant mortality rate between 2005-2010. ,

Today, the Iraqi health care system remains low on medical professionals, equipment and pharmaceutical supplies all as a result of the unrest during the period previously mentioned.

Education

After decades of sanctions and occupation followed by years of neglect, mismanagement and corruption the education system is left suffering. Literacy rates are declining and Iraq failed to achieve the education-for-all Millennium Development Goal by 2015. It is worth mentioning that prior to 1991 Iraq had the best educational system in the Middle East.

The Iraqi Government still ignores its duty under Article 13.2(e) of the ESC Covenant. The re-building of educational infrastructure has been neglected ever since it was initially destroyed by the wars.

Children suffer the most form the deterioration of education. In 2004, one thousand two hundred primary schools were closed for the use as shelters. UNESCO and UNICEF declared that 70% of educational infrastructure was damaged or neglected. Corruption and embezzlement further deepens the dilemma.

Direct attacks continue to be made against educators and staff, 479 professors were assassinated since 2003. The DeBathhification policy forced top university personnel out of office.
Furthermore, sectarian division and religious fundamentalism remains one of the reasons facilitating the awful degradation in the general quality of education.

Women Rights
Unfortunately, due to the occupation and the following unrest women literacy, employment and employment have plummeted. Article 3 of the Covenant is disregarded.

The professional status of some women subjected them to violence and other threats, since the 2003 invasion and the freedom of women mobility has been hindered. Domestic violence increased significantly and the WHO reported that one in five Iraqi women face household abuse.

Politically, female participation took a nose drop, the number of female MPs is at its lowest and not a single ministry is headed by a female. Taking into consideration Article 49.9 of Iraqi constitution.

On the other side, the occupation left many women widowed. This alongside social instability (lack of federal aid or humanitarian assistance) forced many women below the poverty line. The social stigma of being a single mother can be crippling within the Iraqi society forcing many women to seek prostitution as means of providing for their families.

The utter need for resources make single women more prone to trafficking networks and security force corruption facilitates it. Or in other cases, women are inserted into the pre-Islamic cultural practice of 'pleasure marriage'.

Child Rights
The complexity of the social platform reaches children; today the average child in Iraq is either missing out on adequate education or happens to be left traumatized from an incident or an orphan. The government does not fully abide with its obligations under Article 10.3 of the Covenant.
Child mortality is on the rise; treatable diseases continue to claim the life of children and account for over 30% of child deaths. The WHO reported lower immunization rates and increased shut down of child-health programs.

Many children suffer from PTSD or learning disabilities related to a lack of early stimulation and learning. In an attempt to ease their suffering many minors turn to narcotics.

Quite often, children are caught between cross fire and are forced to enlist as militant child soldiers.
It is our conclusion that the deterioration of the economic, social and cultural rights in Iraq are mainly a result of the 1991 war and sanctions, the 2003 war and the occupation that followed.
While those conditions, including accountability, need to be addressed by the Iraqi government the United Nations and the international community at large also have a responsibility to independently address the matter of accountability and justice for the people of Iraq in view of war and occupation.

Therefore, we call on the United Nations Human Rights Council to:

1. Appoint a Special Rapporteur to Iraq, to report on all human rights violations in Iraq.

2. To dispatch an independent, international investigation commission to thoroughly investigate all human rights violations in Iraq since 2003, and suggest the proper mean to address these violations and bring perpetrators to justice.

***

The BRussells Tribunal, Arab Lawyers Association- UK, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), The International League of Iraqi Academics (ILIA), The Iraqi Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), Women Will Association (WWA), Organization for Widows and Orphans (OWO), Ikraam Center for Human Rights, Belgian Peace Movement, Ligue camerounaise des droits de l'homme, International Coalition against War Criminals (ICAWC), Medical Aid for the Third World, Association of Iraqi Diplomats (AID), General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), Association of Iraqi Intellectuals and Academics, The International Network of Arab Human Rights NGOs, The Perdana Global Peace Foundation, Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for Iraq Sovereignty- CEOSI, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, Association, Organisation for Justice & Democracy in Iraq (OJDI), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

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Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Jossour Forum des Femmes Marocaines, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[17 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-02691(E)

Please recycle

Children Rights

Jossour Forum of Moroccan's women welcomes the discussion concerning the current challenges that effect the situation of child right's all over the world and welcome that the Human Rights Council will consider the report of the High Commissioner on investment in the rights of the child, based on good practices and lessons learned. It also welcome the discussion proposed on the 28th General Assembly session concerning the promotion and protection of all human rights civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights including the right to development.

During this year countries have adopted in the United Nation a new sustainable development agenda and global agreement on climate change , the 17 goals of the agenda 2030 are an opportunity to bring the countries and citizens of the world together to embark on a new path to improve the lives of people everywhere.

Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

The last UN statistic announce that the Enrolment in primary education in developing countries has reached 91 % but 57 million children remain out of school, more than half of children that have not enrolled in school live in sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 50 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas, 103 million youth worldwide lack basic literacy skills, and more than 60 per cent of them are women.

Jossour Forum of Moroccan's women also shares the recommendation of many other's NGO and personalities around the world , on the need to adopt the agenda 2030 , where the Goal 4 focus on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

As for the objective of Jossour Forum of Moroccan's women- a nongovernmental organization with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council- it commits to working on the child right's specially girls.

Jossour Forum of Moroccan's women taking into consideration the current socioeconomic and political context of women and children, take this opportunity to call upon all member states to:

Affirming that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, having a good education,

Affirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and must be treated in a fair and equal manner, recognizing the need to ensure the full and effective enjoyment for the child,

Recognizing that investing in children's quality education and health service is critical to achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable human development for present and future generations, and delivers benefits to society and the economy at large,

Ensure the enjoyment by children of all their human rights, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, without discrimination of any kind, and emphasizes in this regard the fundamental link between laws, policies and budgets and the responsibility to ensure that relevant national laws and policies are translated into the protection and realization of the rights of the child;

Requests to take all possible measures towards the promotion of good education, protection and realization of the rights of the child without discrimination of any kind, paying special attention to children in vulnerable situations and rural area;

Encourages to strengthen their commitment, cooperation and mutual assistance with the objective of implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and realizing fully the rights of the child, including through the sharing of good practices, research, policies, monitoring and capacity-building;

Encourages to give due consideration to children's rights in the discussions on the agenda 2030 and financing for development, and to ensure an open, transparent, participatory, inclusive and child-sensitive framework for that agenda;

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Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Joint written statement* submitted by the Nonviolent Radical Party, the Transnational and Transparty, non-governmental organization in general consultative status, the Women's Human Rights International Association, non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-02694(E)

Please recycle

Human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The human rights situation in Iran continues to be very disturbing. The report to the UN General Assembly by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, is indicative of this point.

According to the latest statistics, the Islamic Republic of Iran has executed nearly 1000 people in 2015. This is the highest number of executions since 1989 in one year.

Since Hassan Rouhani came to office, more than 2,200 people have been executed in Iran which has the highest number of executions in the world per capita. Execution of juveniles continues in Iran, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child on January 29 in its concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced: "The Committee deplores that the State party continues to execute children and those who have committed a crime while under 18 years of age, despite its previous recommendations and numerous criticisms by human rights treaty bodies."

Some 60 executions took place in public in Iran in the past year. Numerous photos of the executions that were published in state-run media indicate the presence of women and children in different scenes of executions in various cities across Iran. These scenes violate children's rights and the child convention to which the Islamic Republic is a signatory.

Many of these executions that are carried out in the name of fighting drugs are ambiguous because in the atmosphere of repression and censorship that exists in Iran and the lack of adequate judicial due process, it is hard to find the facts behind the executions that occur in Iran due to drug-related offenses.

However, one thing is certain: The Iranian regime by continuing the executions doesn't want to end the drug abuses in Iran, but to spread fear in the turbulent Iranian society.

In a country where Facebook posts, tweets and even private photos taken by people are checked and controlled, it is unbelievable that there is no possibility of investigating and arresting the main distributors of drugs.

Since coming to power, Hassan Rouhani presented his policy as if he will bring about changes. But the reality of executions last year and organized repression by the regime's security forces against the press, journalists, activists and families of political prisoners and members of the Iranian opposition that followed led to mass arbitrary arrests and death sentences or long prison sentences on false charges, including "Moharebeh" (waging war God), and showed the illusory nature of these changes more than any other time.

Last December, the Islamic Republic of Iran was rebuked by the United Nations for the 62nd time. Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur, noted with disappointment that execution of juveniles by the regime continues and women are still treated as second-class citizens. Last year, dozens of women were attacked with acid on their face for not abiding by the strict dress code. Young women were banned from taking part in some academic fields in universities, and during Rouhani's tenure the parliament has passed several laws that marginalize half of the population more than ever and deny them their rights.

Journalists, bloggers and opposition activists continue to be arrested by the regime. In addition, many political prisoners of the 1980s and supporters of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) were re-arrested and persecuted in the past year.

Regarding the alarming situation of girls in Iran, the Committee on the Rights of the Child states in its report: "The Committee is seriously concerned that despite its previous recommendations, the age of majority remains set at pre-

defined ages of puberty for girls at 9 and for boys at 15 lunar years which results in depriving girls and boys above these ages from the protection under the Convention."

According to the United Nations report, the Iranian regime has continued to use various methods of torture, including gouging out eyes and amputation of limbs in the past year. In addition, according to Iran's state-run media, the regime has flogged hundreds of people under the pretext of breaking fast in Ramadan. All of these conducts are gross violations of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is a signatory.

The deplorable human rights record of the Islamic Republic of Iran last year, as well as the 110 executions which occurred from December 18, 2015, when the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, until February 12, 2016, reiterates more than ever the need to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and also to provide a substantive resolution to advance the human rights situation in Iran.

Hands off Cain and Comite de soutien au droits de l'homme en iran – CSDHI, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.